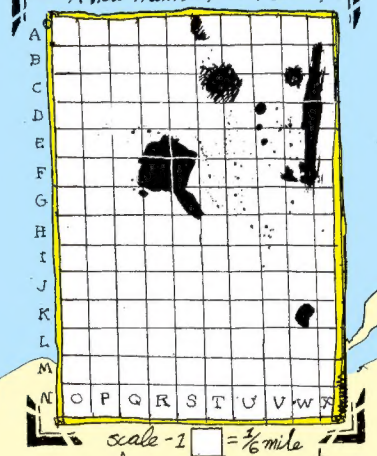
WWW.MARVEL.COM © 2013 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE NEW MUTANTS™

HOURS AGO, DANIELLE MOONSTAR WALKED ALONE INTO THE SNOW-SWEPT NIGHT TO FACE THE DEMON BEAR THAT HAD SLAIN HER PARENTS WHEN SHE WAS A CHILD.
HER FRIENDS AND TEAMMATES--THE NEW MUTANTS (FELLOW STUDENTS AT CHARLES XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS)--FOUND HER BROKEN BODY.
IT WAS A MIRACLE THE YOUNG CHEYENNE SURVIVED TO REACH THE LOCAL HOSPITAL. THE DOCTORS' PROGNOSIS, AS THEY RUSHED HER INTO SURGERY, WASN'T HOPEFUL.
BUT THE BEAR WASN'T DONE WITH DANI. IT CAME FOR HER AGAIN--
--ONLY TO FIND THE NEW MUTANTS READY TO GIVE THEIR LIVES IN HER DEFENSE. WHILE THE DOCTORS REMAINED OBLIVIOUS TO THE BATTLE RAGING THROUGHOUT THE BUILDING, DANI'S FRIENDS, THOUGH HARD-PRESSED, PROVED THEMSELVES A MATCH FOR THEIR MYSTIC FOE...
...UNTIL, WITHOUT WARNING, THE BEAR ENVELOPED THEM ALL IN A SPELL WHICH TRANSPORTED THEM ALL FROM EARTH...

© 2013 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental.

—DARKNESS DESCENDS—
—A view from 20,000 feet—



scale - 1 □ = 1/6 mile

Black areas represent areas of land consumed by Demon-Bear's shadow—

...TO THE BEAR'S OWN DOMAIN...

...A VIRGIN AMERICA, UNTOUCHED BY THE WHITE INVADERS FROM ACROSS THE SEA. A PURE, UNSPOILED LAND--RICH WITH POWER.

THE BEAR IS PART OF THE NATURAL SCHEME OF THINGS HERE--YET AT THE SAME TIME, APART FROM IT, AN ABOMINATION. A SYMBOL OF STRENGTH AND ORDER TWISTED INTO A LOATHSOME TRAVESTY OF ITS TRUE SELF, ITS VERY PRESENCE CORRUPTING THE EARTH LIKE A PLAGUE.

—A CHRONICLE OF THE NEW MUTANTS

brought to you by—

STAN LEE—

and

CHRIS CLAREMONT
the writer

BILL SIENKIEWICZ
the artist

TOM ORZECHOWSKI
the letterer

GLYNIS WEIN
the colorist

ANN NOCENTI
the editor

JIM SHOOTER
the editor who is much taller, and coincidentally, CHIEF.

BILL SIENKIEWICZ

IN THAT GLOBE--AH CAN SEE DANI!

IT'S A BRIDGE, SAM, BETWEEN THIS WORLD AND OUR OWN. SO FAR, THE MAGICKAL *WARDS* I PLACED AROUND THE OPERATING ROOM ARE KEEPING THE BEAR AT BAY, BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG THEY'LL LAST!

THE CREATURE HAS OFFICER CORSI AND NURSE FRIEDLANDER AS ITS PRISONERS, ILLYANA--IS THERE NOTHING YOU CAN DO?!

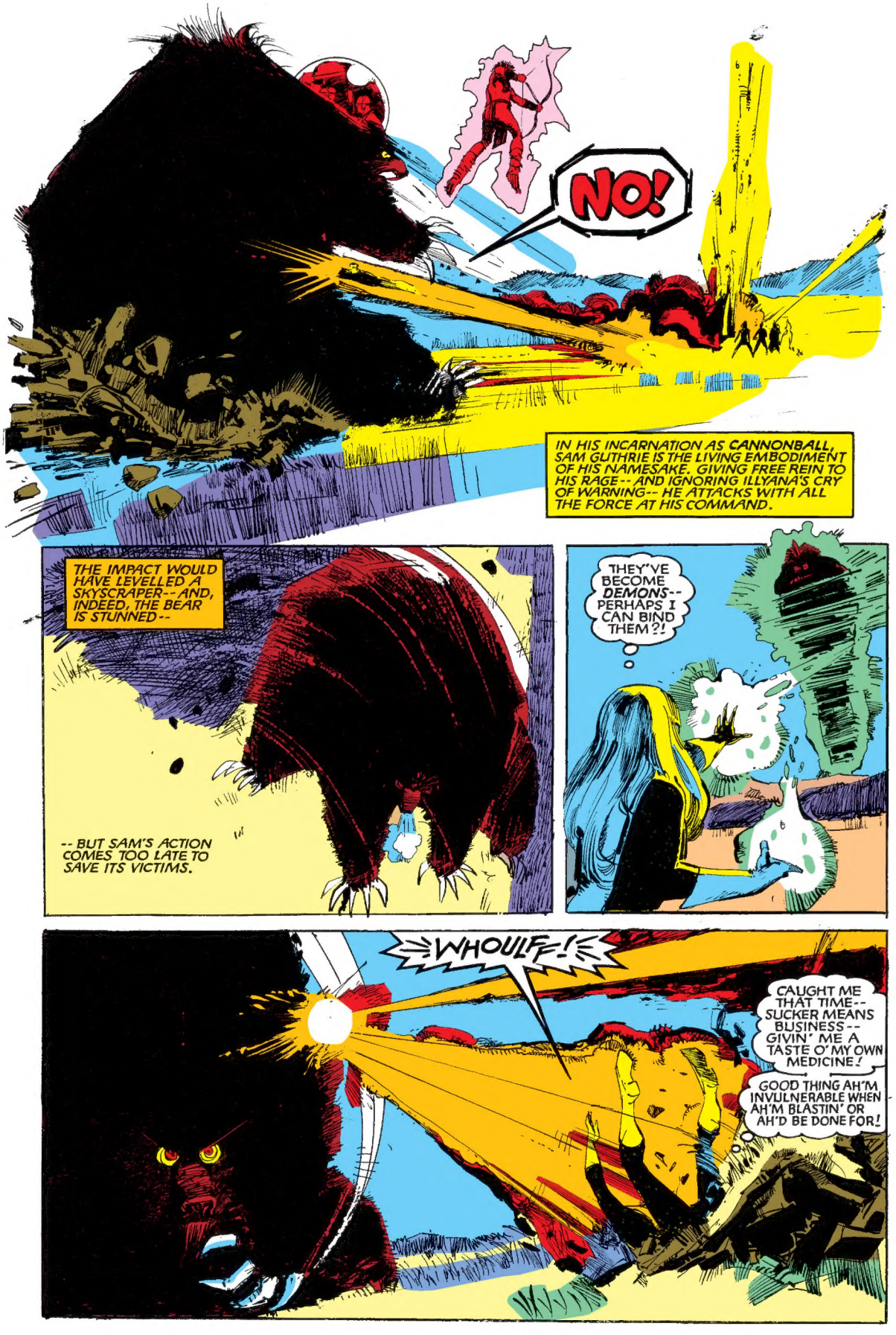
MY SORCEROUS POWERS ARE LIMITED BACK HOME, 'BERTO--BUT THIS SEEMS TO BE A MOSTLY MAGICKAL REALM. I'LL TRY MY BEST--!

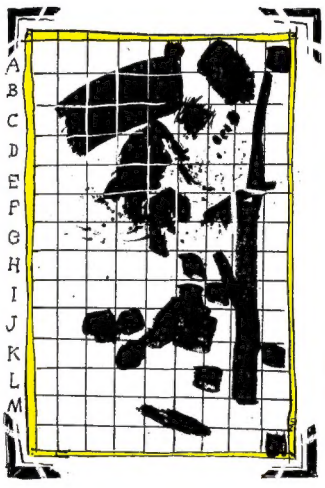
NO, 'BERTO--THA'S NA' RIGHT!

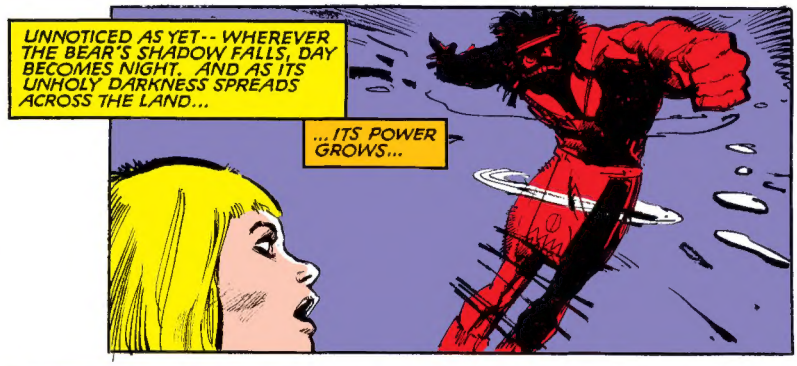
HOW DARE WE TRUST ILLYANA--WHEN SHE'S AS MUCH A DEMON AS YON BEAR?!

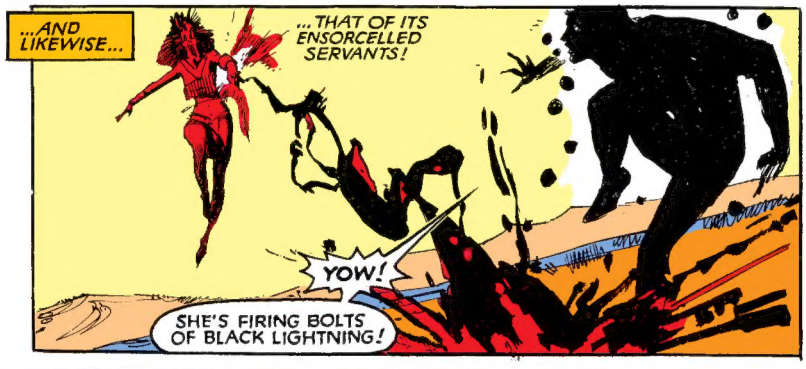
BADLANDS

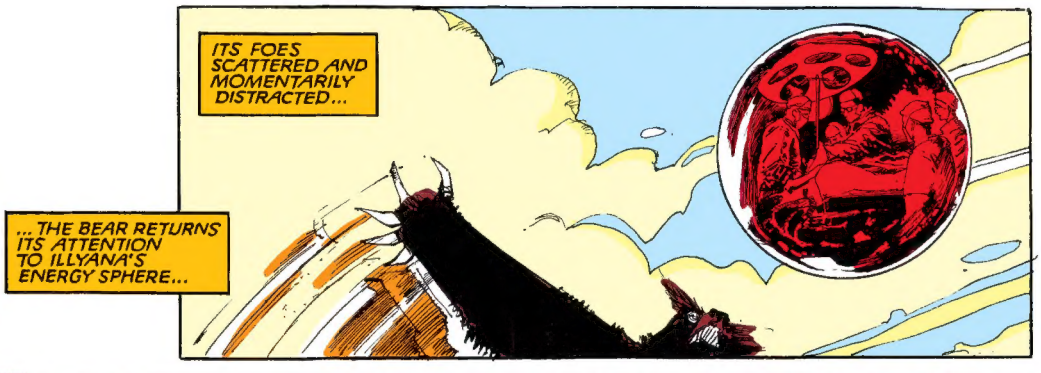
BEFORE ILLYANA RASPUTIN CAN EVEN BEGIN HER ENCHANTMENTS, HOWEVER...
...THE MONSTROUS AVATAR STRIKES...
...ITS CLAWS DOING NO HARM TO THE BODIES OF ITS HELPLESS CAPTIVES...
... ONLY TO THEIR SOULS.

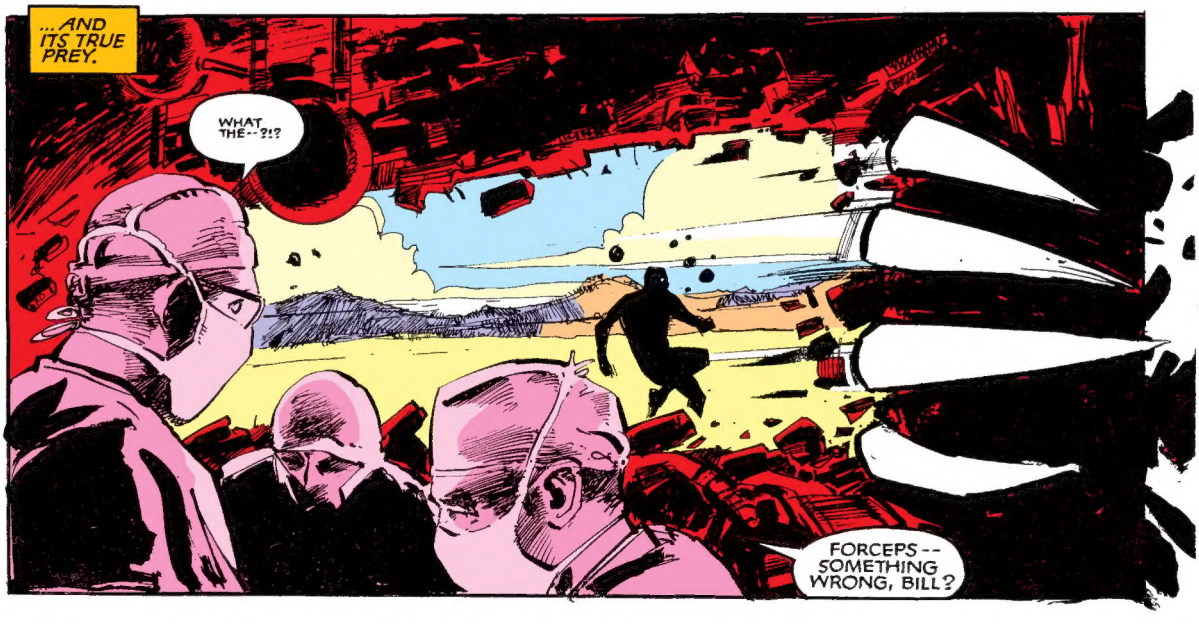

NO!
IN HIS INCARNATION AS CANNONBALL, SAM GUTHRIE IS THE LIVING EMBODIMENT OF HIS NAMESAKE. GIVING FREE REIN TO HIS RAGE -- AND IGNORING ILLYANA'S CRY OF WARNING -- HE ATTACKS WITH ALL THE FORCE AT HIS COMMAND.
THE IMPACT WOULD HAVE LEVELLED A SKYSCRAPER -- AND, INDEED, THE BEAR IS STUNNED --
-- BUT SAM'S ACTION COMES TOO LATE TO SAVE ITS VICTIMS.
THEY'VE BECOME DEMONS -- PERHAPS I CAN BIND THEM?!
WHOUFF!
CAUGHT ME THAT TIME -- SUCKER MEANS BUSINESS -- GIVIN' ME A TASTE O' MY OWN MEDICINE!
GOOD THING AH'M INVULNERABLE WHEN AH'M BLASTIN' OR AH'D BE DONE FOR!

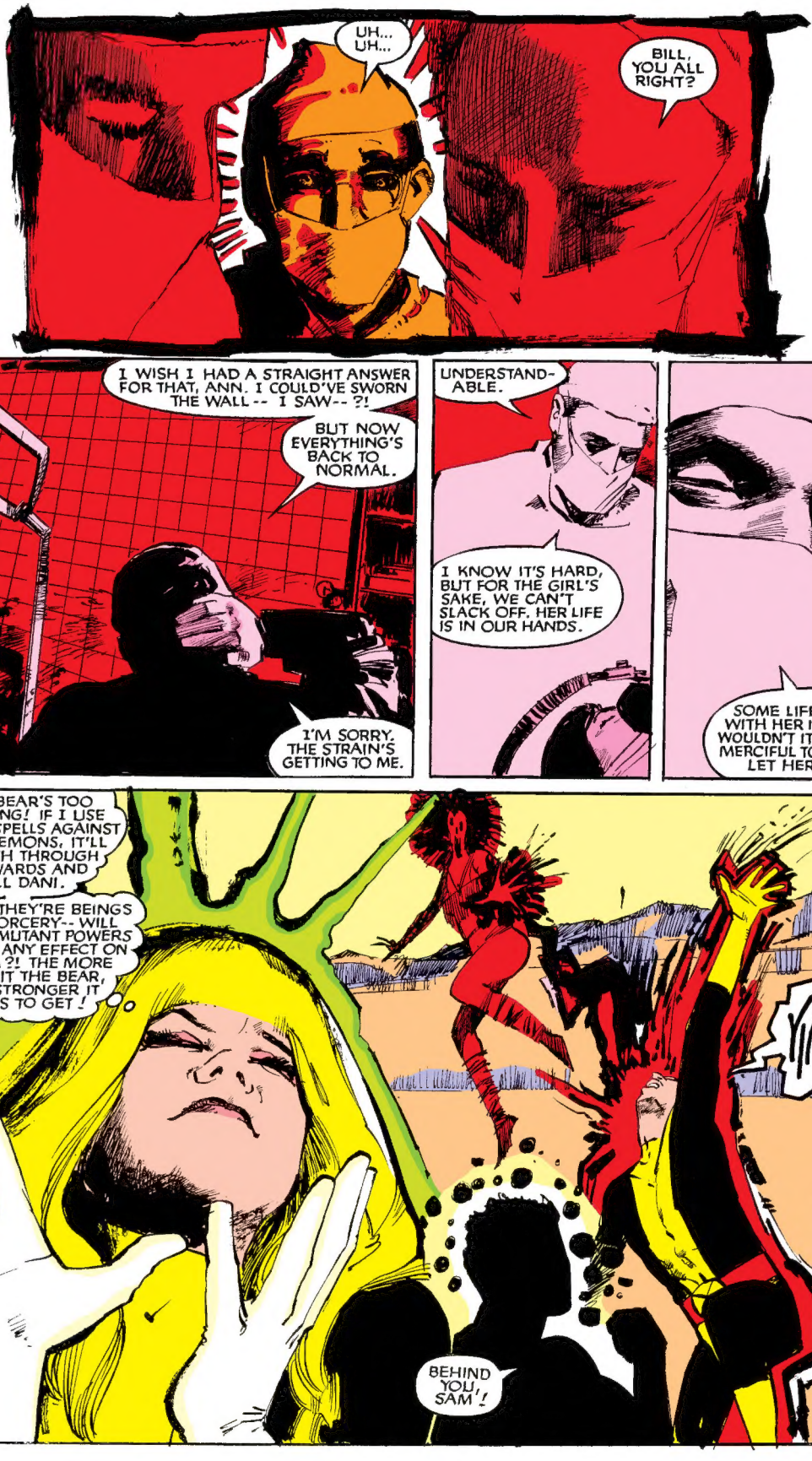

A B C D E F G H I J K L M

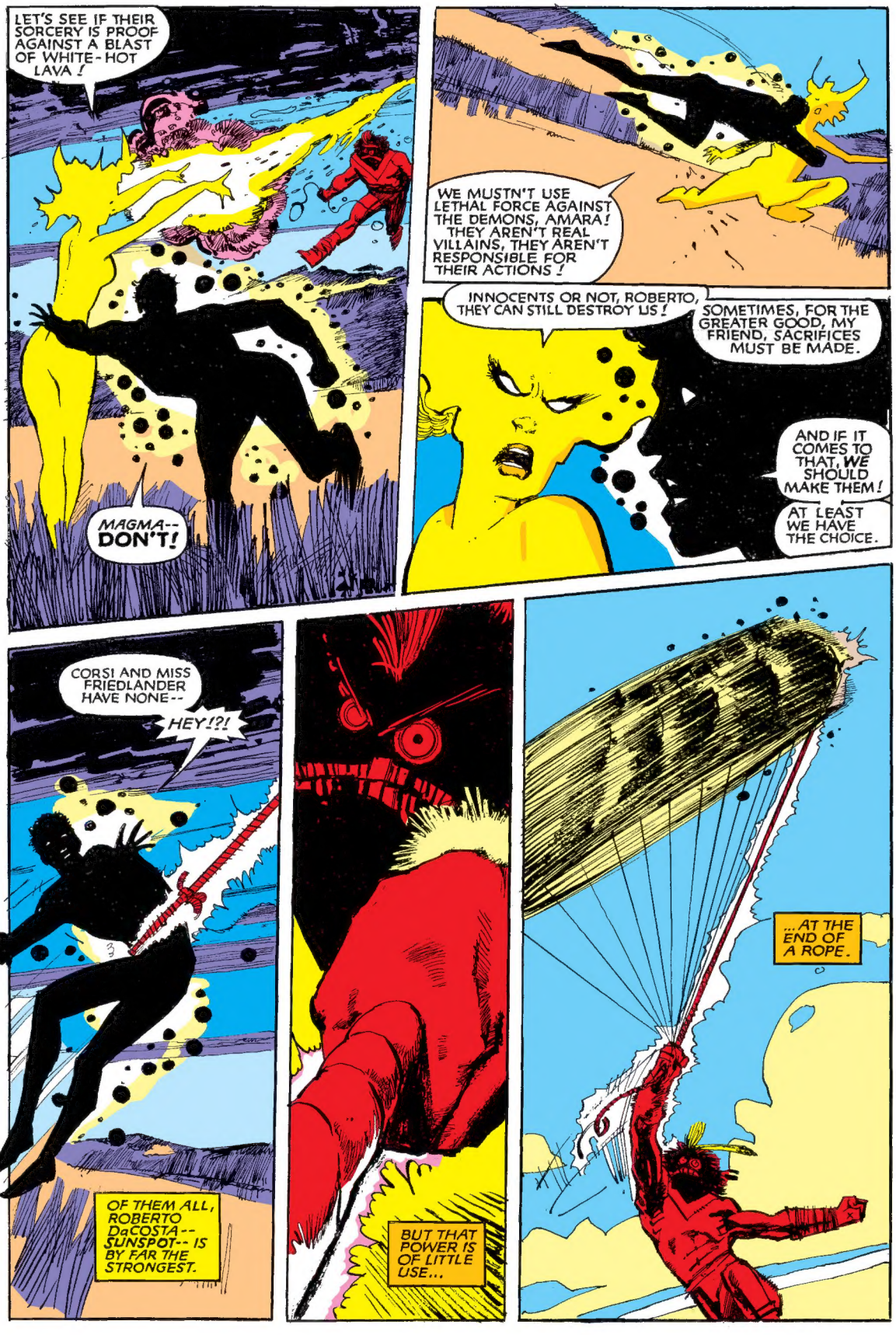

UNNOTICED AS YET-- WHEREVER THE BEAR'S SHADOW FALLS, DAY BECOMES NIGHT. AND AS ITS UNHOLY DARKNESS SPREADS ACROSS THE LAND...
...ITS POWER GROWS...

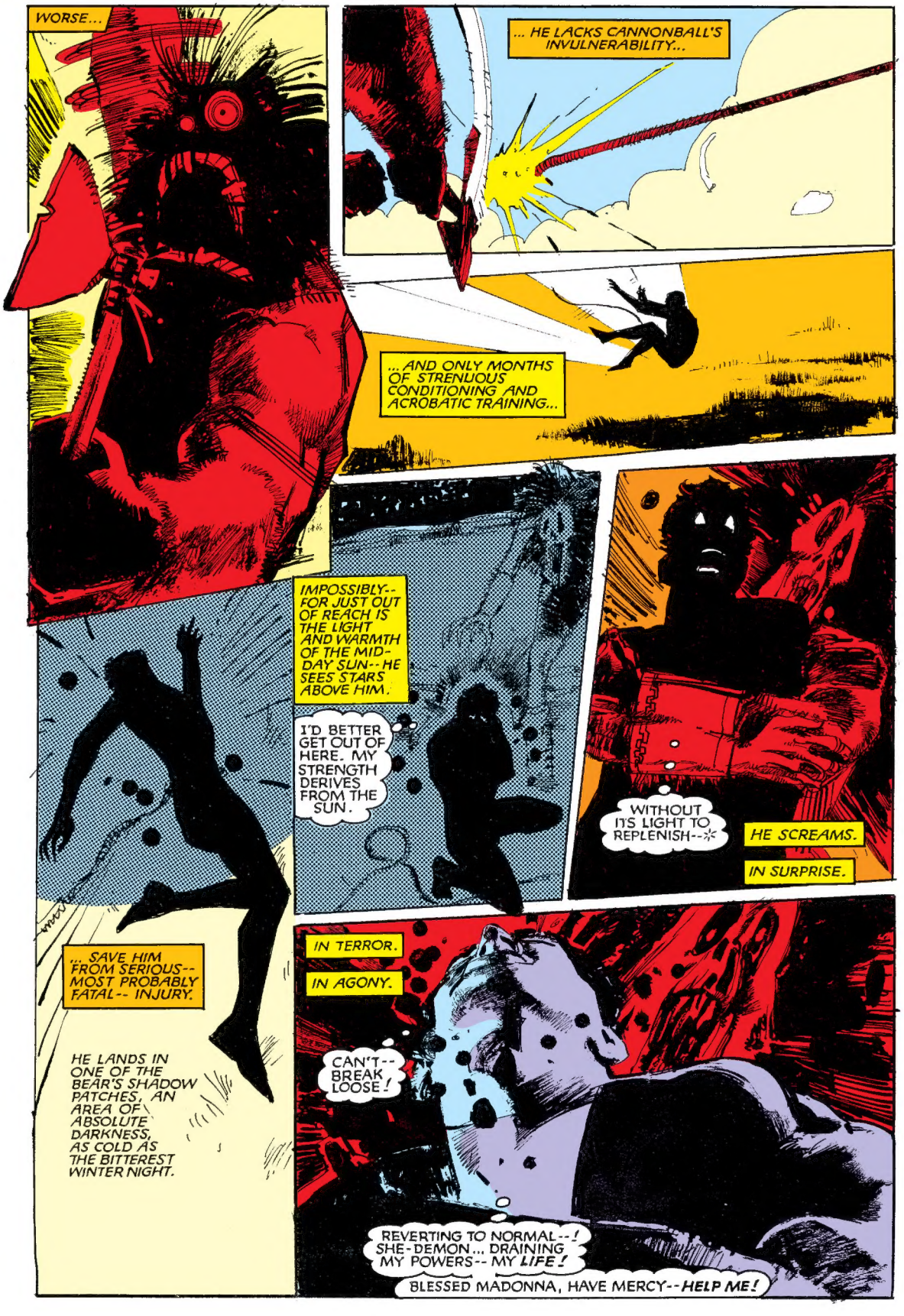

...AND LIKEWISE...
...THAT OF ITS ENSORCELLED SERVANTS!
YOW!
SHE'S FIRING BOLTS OF BLACK LIGHTNING!

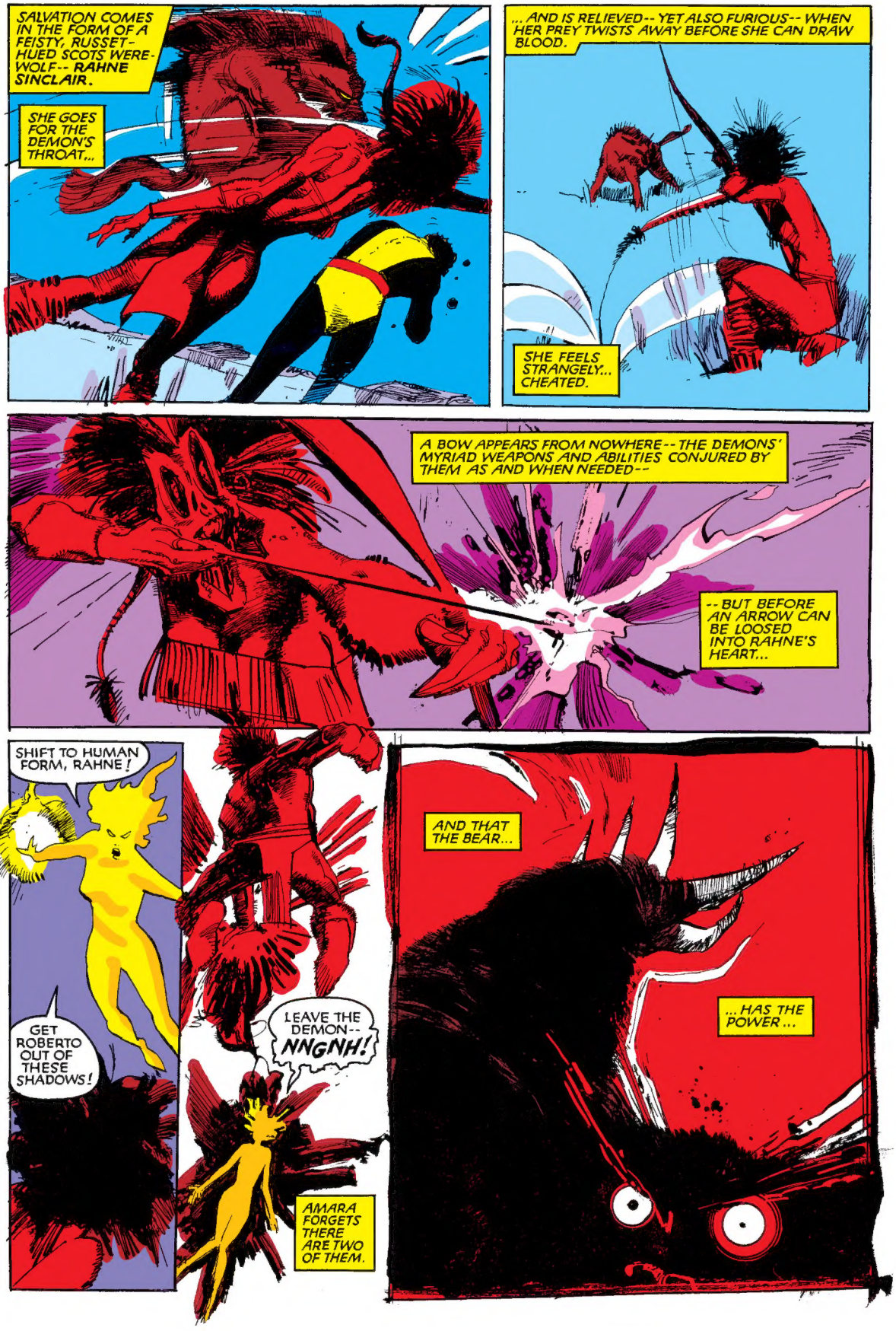

ITS FOES SCATTERED AND MOMENTARILY DISTRACTED...
...THE BEAR RETURNS ITS ATTENTION TO ILLYANA'S ENERGY SPHERE...


...AND ITS TRUE PREY.
WHAT THE--?!?
FORCEPS -- SOMETHING WRONG, BILL?

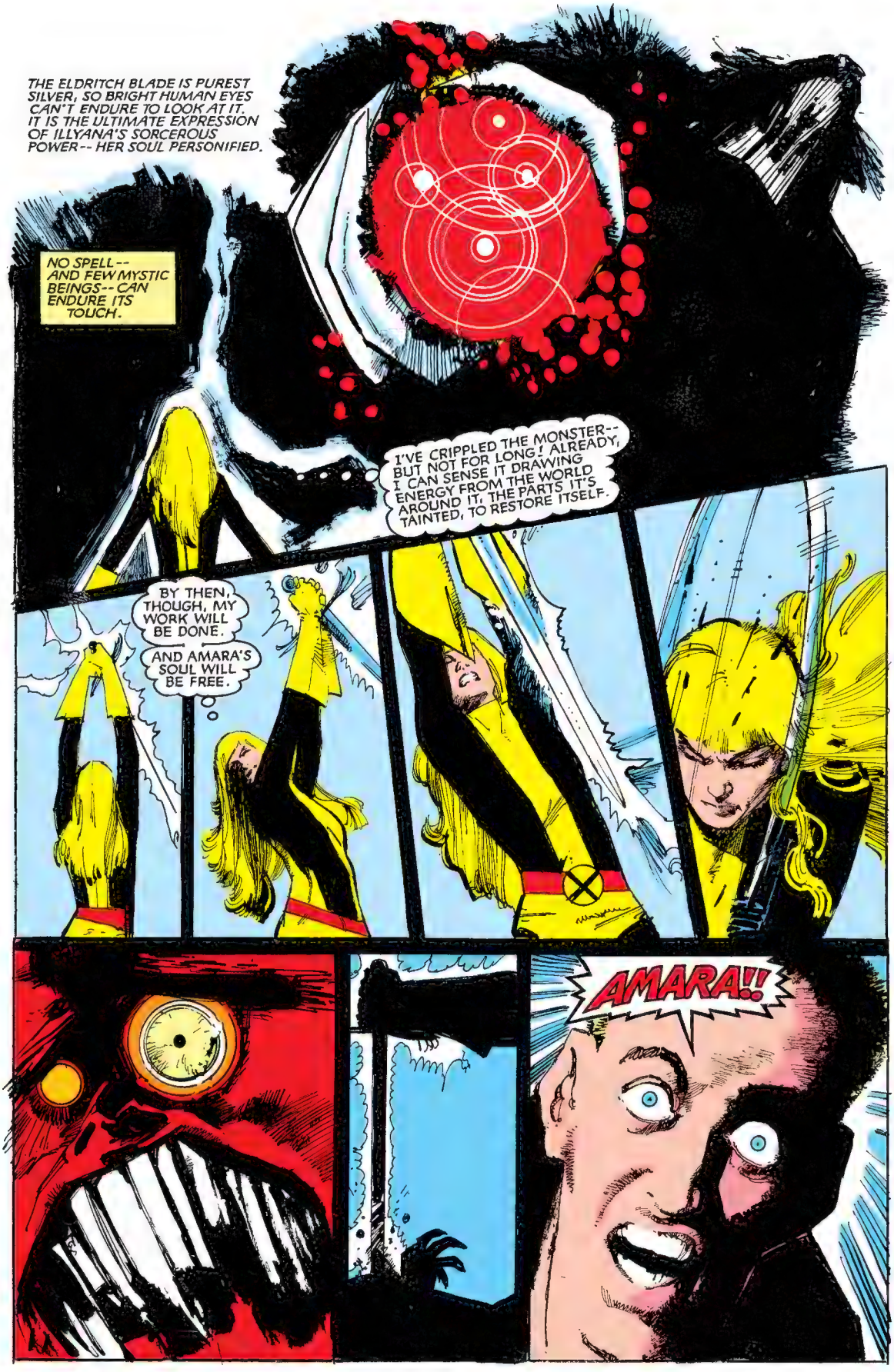

UH... UH...
BILL, YOU ALL RIGHT?
I WISH I HAD A STRAIGHT ANSWER FOR THAT, ANN. I COULD'VE SWORN THE WALL -- I SAW-- ?!
BUT NOW EVERYTHING'S BACK TO NORMAL.
I'M SORRY. THE STRAIN'S GETTING TO ME.
UNDERSTAND-ABLE.
I KNOW IT'S HARD, BUT FOR THE GIRL'S SAKE, WE CAN'T SLACK OFF. HER LIFE IS IN OUR HANDS.
SOME LIFE, PETER. WITH HER INJURIES, WOULDN'T IT BE MORE MERCIFUL TO SIMPLY LET HER DIE?
THE BEAR'S TOO STRONG! IF I USE ANY SPELLS AGAINST ITS DEMONS, IT'LL SMASH THROUGH MY WARDS AND KILL DANI.
BUT THEY'RE BEINGS OF SORCERY-- WILL OUR MUTANT POWERS HAVE ANY EFFECT ON THEM ?! THE MORE WE HIT THE BEAR, THE STRONGER IT SEEMS TO GET !
YIAHRR!
BEHIND YOU, SAM !


LET'S SEE IF THEIR SORCERY IS PROOF AGAINST A BLAST OF WHITE-HOT LAVA!
MAGMA-- DON'T!
WE MUSTN'T USE LETHAL FORCE AGAINST THE DEMONS, AMARA! THEY AREN'T REAL VILLAINS, THEY AREN'T RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS!
INNOCENTS OR NOT, ROBERTO, THEY CAN STILL DESTROY US!
SOMETIMES, FOR THE GREATER GOOD, MY FRIEND, SACRIFICES MUST BE MADE.
AND IF IT COMES TO THAT, WE SHOULD MAKE THEM!
AT LEAST WE HAVE THE CHOICE.
CORSI AND MISS FRIEDLANDER HAVE NONE--
HEY!?!
OF THEM ALL, ROBERTO DaCOSTA-- SUNSPOT-- IS BY FAR THE STRONGEST.
BUT THAT POWER IS OF LITTLE USE...
...AT THE END OF A ROPE.

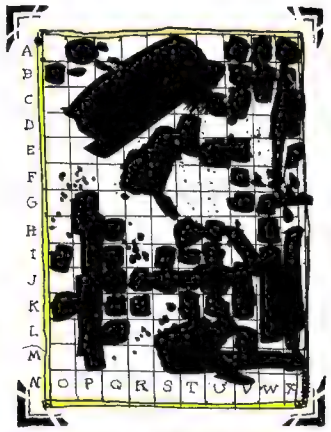

WORSE...
... HE LACKS CANNONBALL'S INVULNERABILITY...
... AND ONLY MONTHS OF STRENUOUS CONDITIONING AND ACROBATIC TRAINING...
IMPOSSIBLY--FOR JUST OUT OF REACH IS THE LIGHT AND WARMTH OF THE MID-DAY SUN--HE SEES STARS ABOVE HIM.
I'D BETTER GET OUT OF HERE. MY STRENGTH DERIVES FROM THE SUN.
WITHOUT ITS LIGHT TO REPLENISH--
HE SCREAMS.
IN SURPRISE.
... SAVE HIM FROM SERIOUS--MOST PROBABLY FATAL-- INJURY.
HE LANDS IN ONE OF THE BEAR'S SHADOW PATCHES, AN AREA OF ABSOLUTE DARKNESS, AS COLD AS THE BITTEREST WINTER NIGHT.
IN TERROR.
IN AGONY.
CAN'T-- BREAK LOOSE!
REVERTING TO NORMAL--! SHE-DEMON... DRAINING MY POWERS-- MY LIFE!
BLESSED MADONNA, HAVE MERCY--HELP ME!

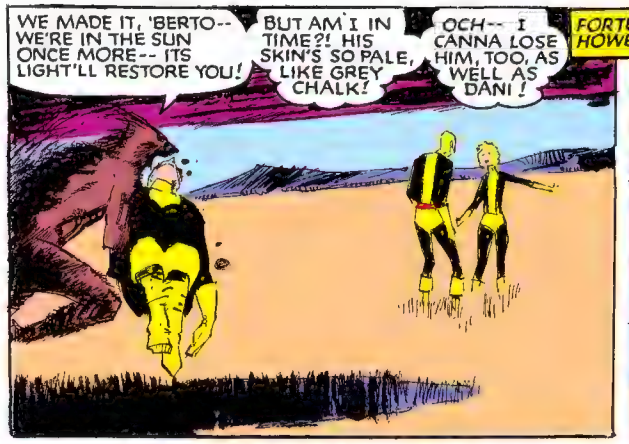

SALVATION COMES IN THE FORM OF A FEISTY, RUSSET-HUED SCOTS WERE-WOLF-- RAHNE SINCLAIR.
SHE GOES FOR THE DEMON'S THROAT...
...AND IS RELIEVED-- YET ALSO FURIOUS-- WHEN HER PREY TWISTS AWAY BEFORE SHE CAN DRAW BLOOD.
SHE FEELS STRANGELY... CHEATED.
A BOW APPEARS FROM NOWHERE-- THE DEMONS' MYRIAD WEAPONS AND ABILITIES CONJURED BY THEM AS AND WHEN NEEDED--
-- BUT BEFORE AN ARROW CAN BE LOOSED INTO RAHNE'S HEART...
SHIFT TO HUMAN FORM, RAHNE!
GET ROBERTO OUT OF THESE SHADOWS!
LEAVE THE DEMON-- NNGNH!
AMARA FORGETS THERE ARE TWO OF THEM.
AND THAT THE BEAR...
...HAS THE POWER...

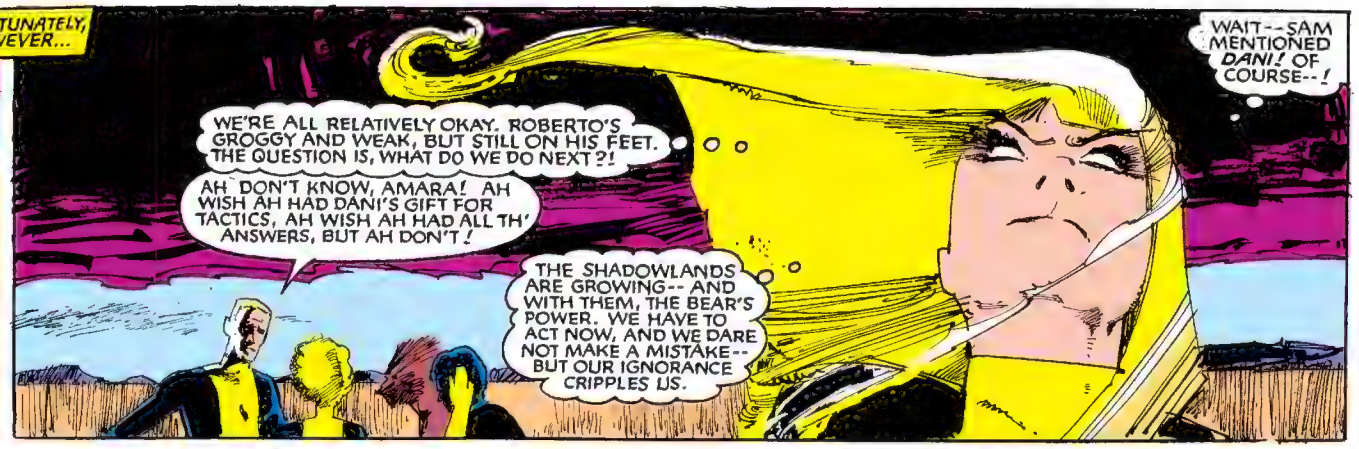
...TO CREATE MORE.
I COULDN'T SAVE THE OTHERS--BUT I WON'T FAIL AMARA!
I'LL HAVE TO GAMBLE THAT SUMMONING MY SOULSWORD WON'T SERIOUSLY CRIPPLE THE WARDS PROTECTING DANI.
AND MAKE SURE, AS WELL, THE BEAR DOESN'T HAVE A CHANCE TO TEST THEM!

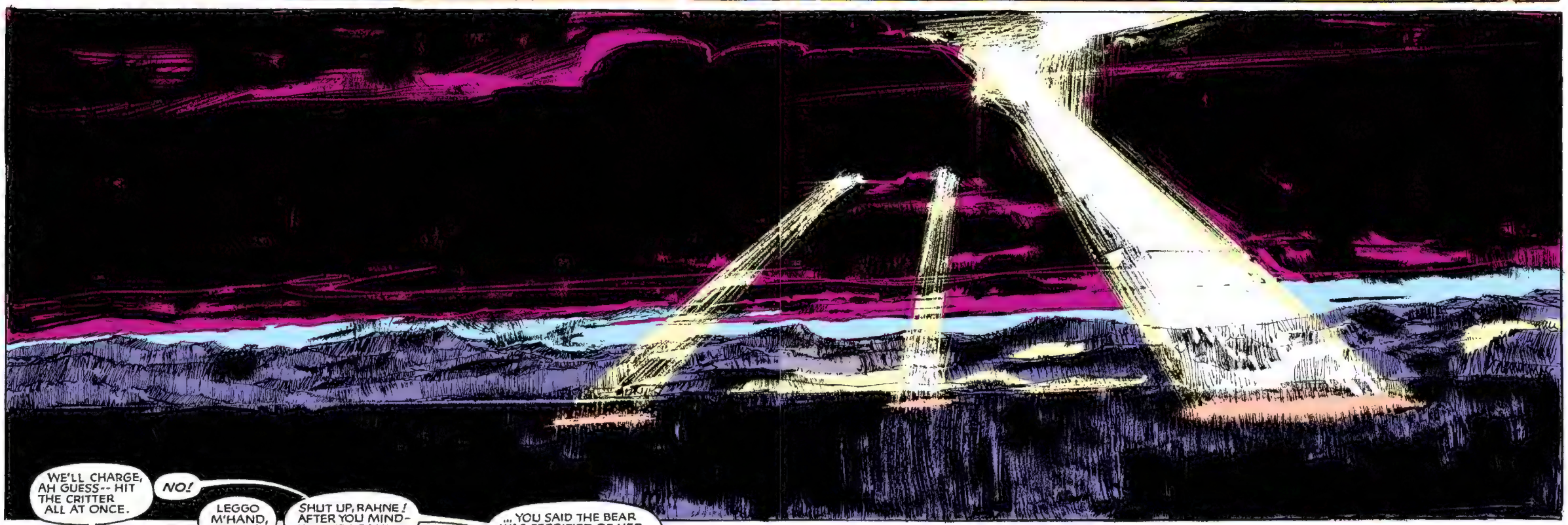

THE ELDRITCH BLADE IS PUREST SILVER, SO BRIGHT HUMAN EYES CAN'T ENDURE TO LOOK AT IT. IT IS THE ULTIMATE EXPRESSION OF ILLYANA'S SORCEROUS POWER-- HER SOUL PERSONIFIED.
NO SPELL-- AND FEW MYSTIC BEINGS-- CAN ENDURE ITS TOUCH.
I'VE CRIPPLED THE MONSTER-- BUT NOT FOR LONG! ALREADY, I CAN SENSE IT DRAWING ENERGY FROM THE WORLD AROUND IT, THE PARTS IT'S TAINTED, TO RESTORE ITSELF.
BY THEN, THOUGH, MY WORK WILL BE DONE.
AND AMARA'S SOUL WILL BE FREE.
AMARA!!

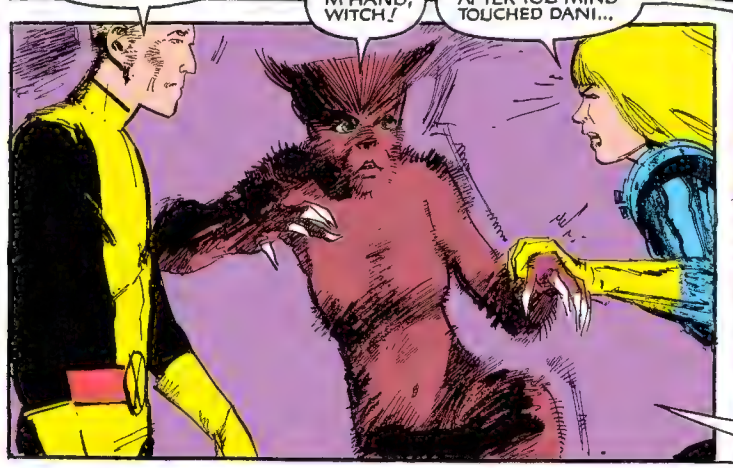
YOU KILLED HER!!
RAHNE HAD YOU PEGGED FROM THE START, WITCH-- LORD FORGIVE ME FOR NOT LIST'NIN' TO HER!
THE EVIL SIDE O' YOU TAKE OVER, GIRL?! YOU FIGURE THIS WAS THE TIME T' SHOW YOUR TRUE COLORS-- T' JOIN UP WITH YOUR OWN KIND?!!
SAM'S POWER... PROTECTS WHOMEVER ... HE'S HOLDING, LIKE IT DOES... HIMSELF.
BUT... HE LET ME GO!
DUMMY... LOVES AMARA-- NEVER GAVE ME... CHANCE TO... EXPLAIN...
MY COSTUME-- TORN TO RIBBONS--
--REVEALING... ARMOR!
IT SAVED MY LIFE-- BUT WHERE DID IT COME FROM?!!
GUTHRIE!
HUH?!?
BARBARIAN FOOL, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!
AMARA-- BUT AH SAW...
... ILLYANA STAB YOU!
SHE WAS SAVING ME, IDIOT! THE BEAR WAS POSSESSING ME-- ENSLAVING MY SOUL--UNTIL ILLYANA USED HER SWORD TO EXORCISE THE BEAST'S EVIL! YOU'D HAVE SEEN IT, SAM, HAD YOU PAUSED--AND THOUGHT-- BEFORE YOU ACTED! INSTEAD, YOU DID THE BEAR'S WORK FOR IT!
BEHIND THEM, THE BEAR STRETCHES ITS SHADOW TO THE HORIZON...
... AND ROARS IN TRIUMPH.

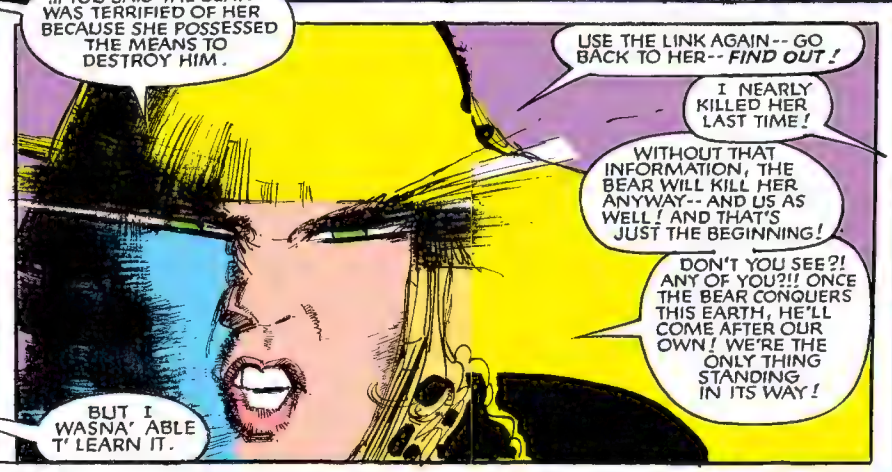

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X

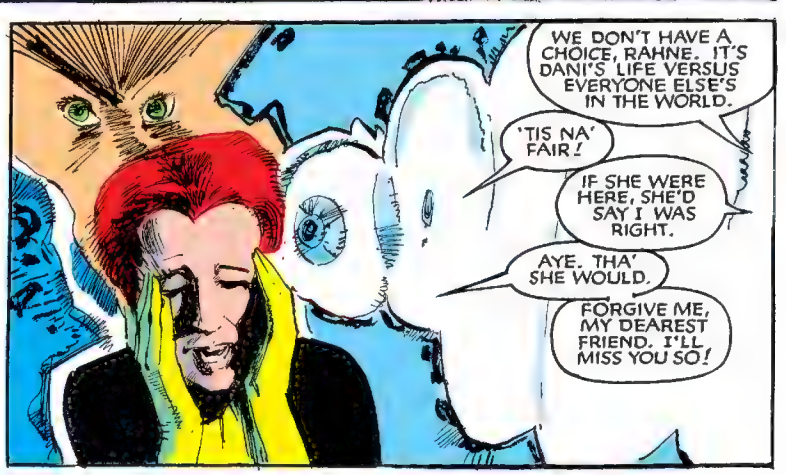

WE MADE IT, 'BERTO-- WE'RE IN THE SUN ONCE MORE-- ITS LIGHT'LL RESTORE YOU!
BUT AM I IN TIME?! HIS SKIN'S SO PALE, LIKE GREY CHALK!
OCH-- I CANNA LOSE HIM, TOO, AS WELL AS DANI!
FORTUNATELY, HOWEVER...

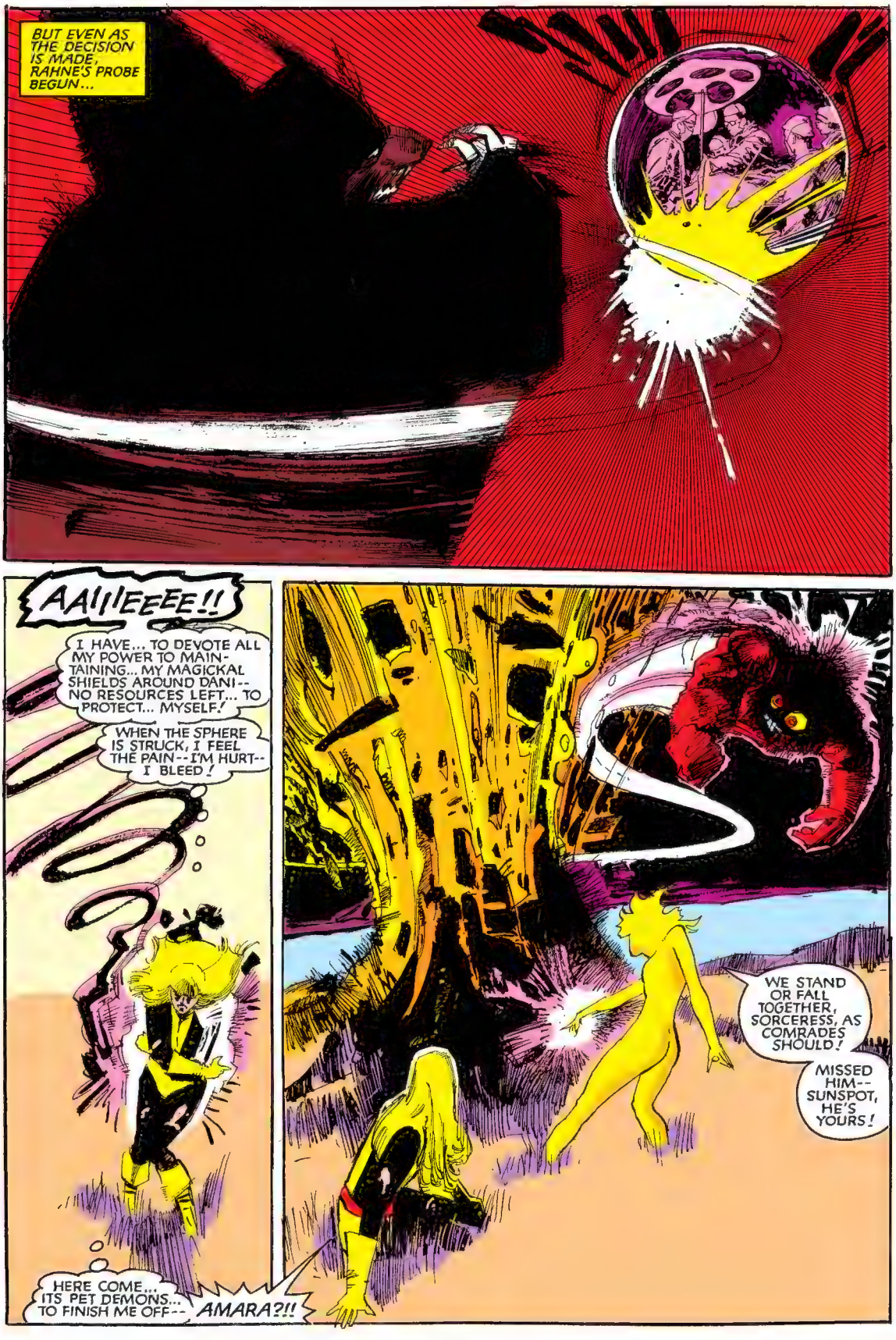

WE'RE ALL RELATIVELY OKAY. ROBERTO'S GROGGY AND WEAK, BUT STILL ON HIS FEET. THE QUESTION IS, WHAT DO WE DO NEXT?!
AH DON'T KNOW, AMARA! AH WISH AH HAD DANI'S GIFT FOR TACTICS, AH WISH AH HAD ALL TH' ANSWERS, BUT AH DON'T!
THE SHADOWLANDS ARE GROWING-- AND WITH THEM, THE BEAR'S POWER. WE HAVE TO ACT NOW, AND WE DARE NOT MAKE A MISTAKE-- BUT OUR IGNORANCE CRIPPLES US.
WAIT-- SAM MENTIONED DANI! OF COURSE--!



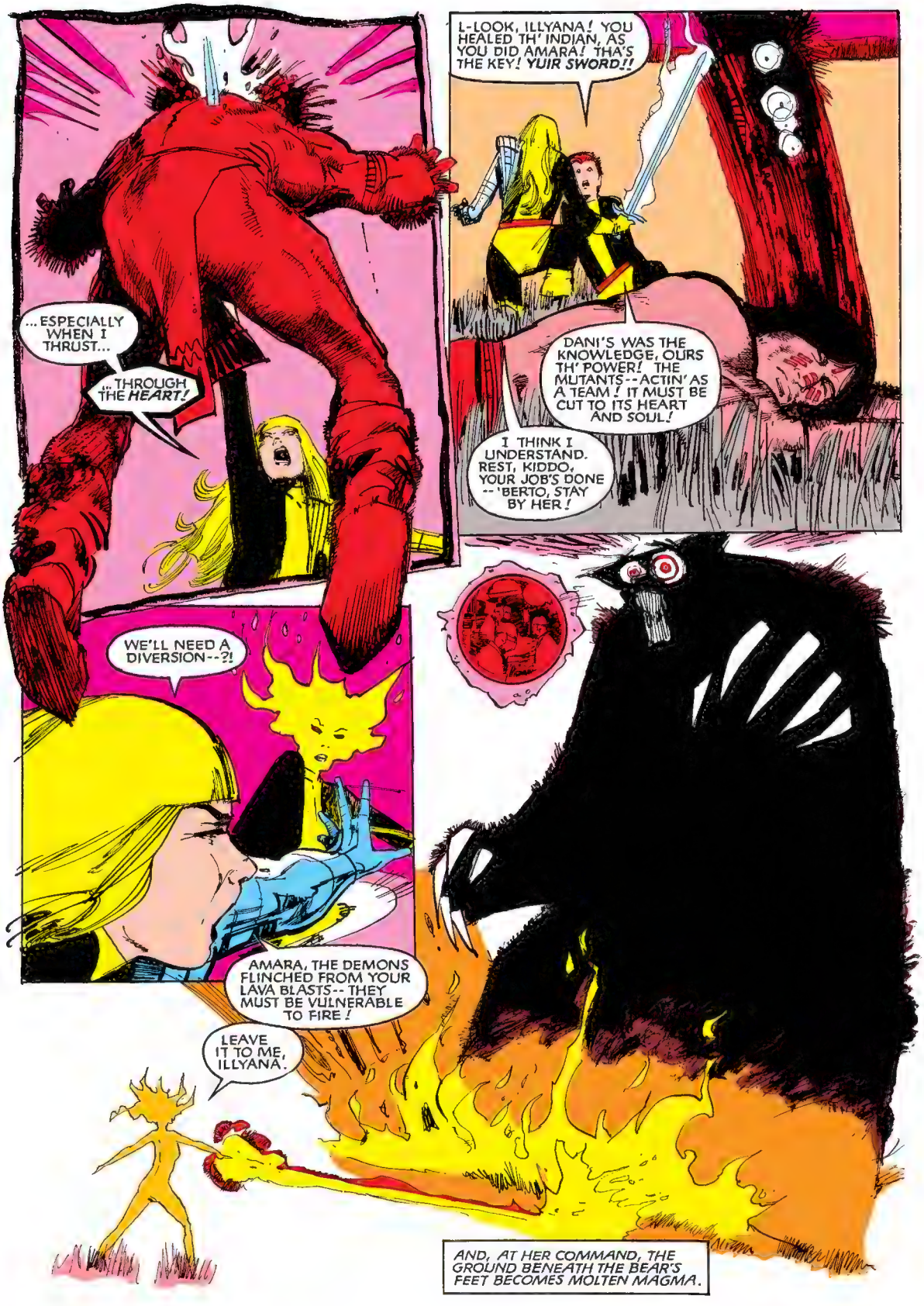

WE'LL CHARGE, AH GUESS-- HIT THE CRITTER ALL AT ONCE.
NO!
LEGGO M'HAND, WITCH!
SHUT UP, RAHNE! AFTER YOU MIND-TOUCHED DANI...

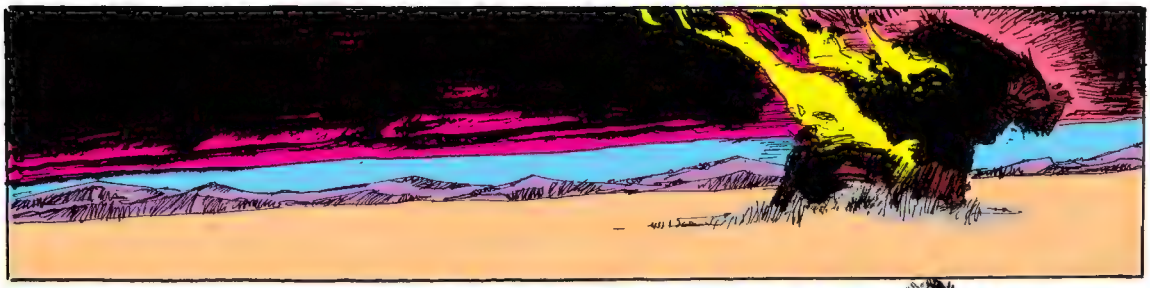

... YOU SAID THE BEAR WAS TERRIFIED OF HER BECAUSE SHE POSSESSED THE MEANS TO DESTROY HIM.
BUT I WASNA' ABLE T' LEARN IT.
USE THE LINK AGAIN-- GO BACK TO HER-- FIND OUT!
I NEARLY KILLED HER LAST TIME!
WITHOUT THAT INFORMATION, THE BEAR WILL KILL HER ANYWAY-- AND US AS WELL! AND THAT'S JUST THE BEGINNING!
DON'T YOU SEE?! ANY OF YOU?!! ONCE THE BEAR CONQUERS THIS EARTH, HE'LL COME AFTER OUR OWN! WE'RE THE ONLY THING STANDING IN ITS WAY!

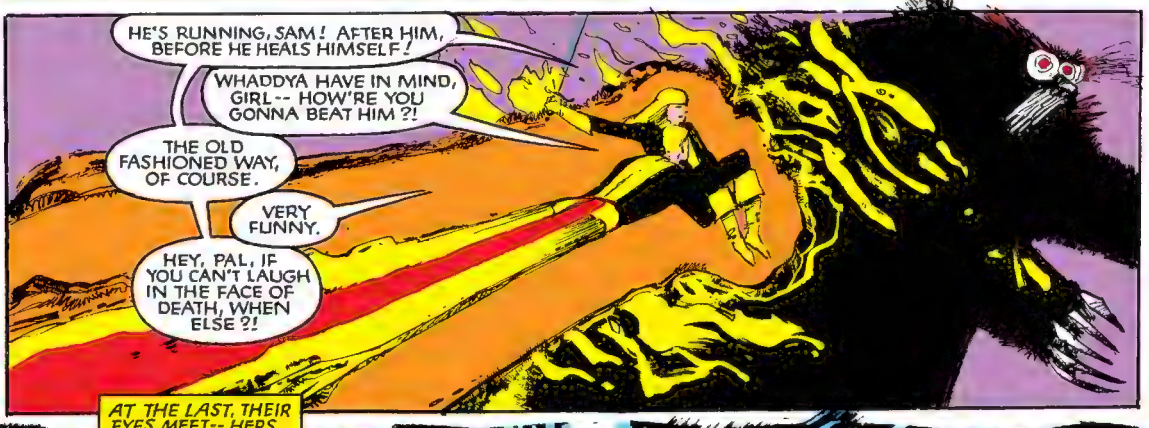

WE DON'T HAVE A CHOICE, RAHNE. IT'S DANI'S LIFE VERSUS EVERYONE ELSE'S IN THE WORLD.
'TIS NA' FAIR!
IF SHE WERE HERE, SHE'D SAY I WAS RIGHT.
AYE. THA' SHE WOULD.
FORGIVE ME, MY DEAREST FRIEND. I'LL MISS YOU SO!

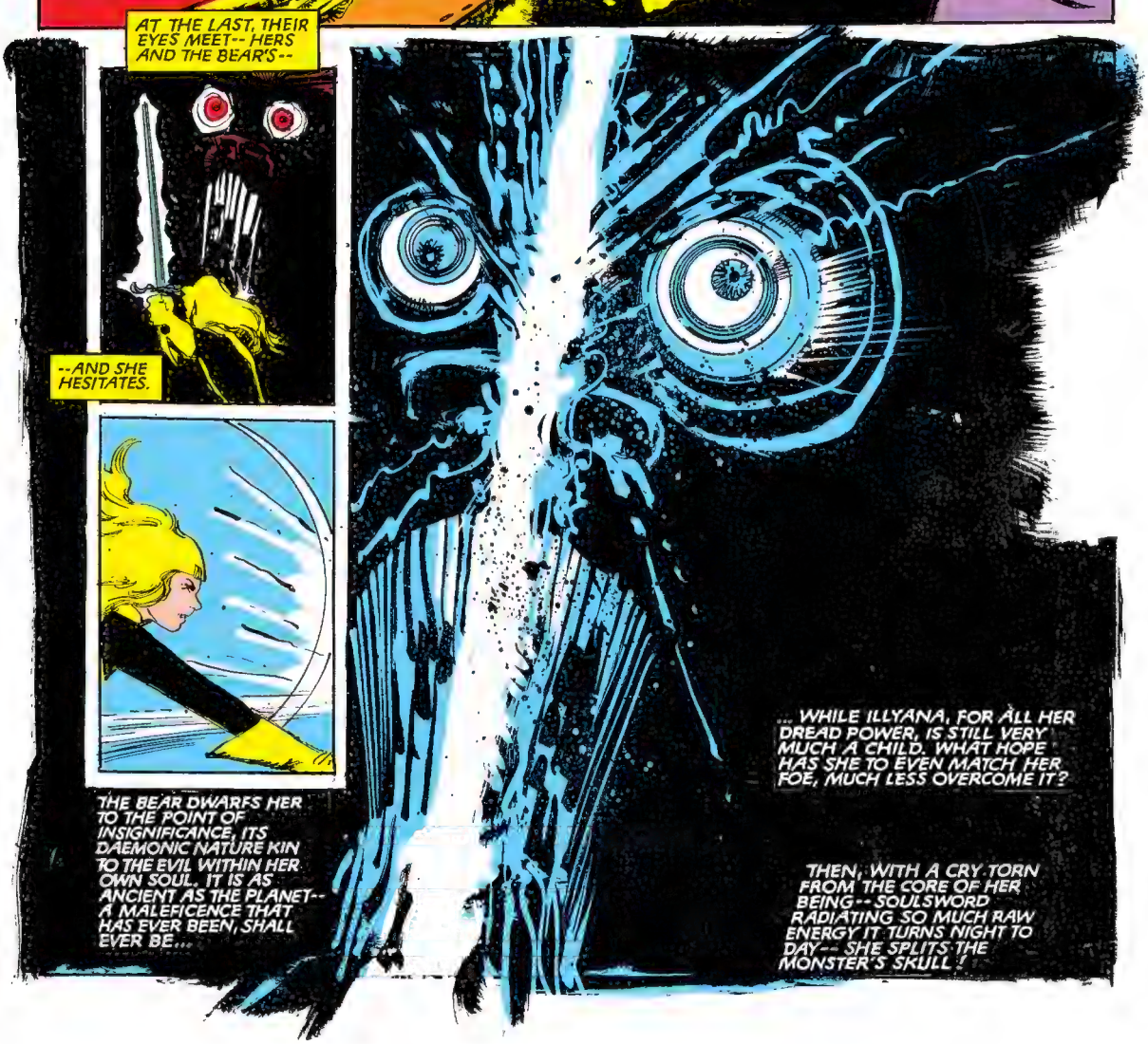

BUT EVEN AS THE DECISION IS MADE, RAHNE'S PROBE BEGUN...
AAIIEEEE!!
I HAVE... TO DEVOTE ALL MY POWER TO MAINTAINING... MY MAGICKAL SHIELDS AROUND DANI-- NO RESOURCES LEFT... TO PROTECT... MYSELF!
WHEN THE SPHERE IS STRUCK, I FEEL THE PAIN--I'M HURT-- I BLEED!
HERE COME... ITS PET DEMONS... TO FINISH ME OFF--
AMARA?!!
WE STAND OR FALL TOGETHER, SORCERESS, AS COMRADES SHOULD!
MISSED HIM-- SUNSPOT, HE'S YOURS!

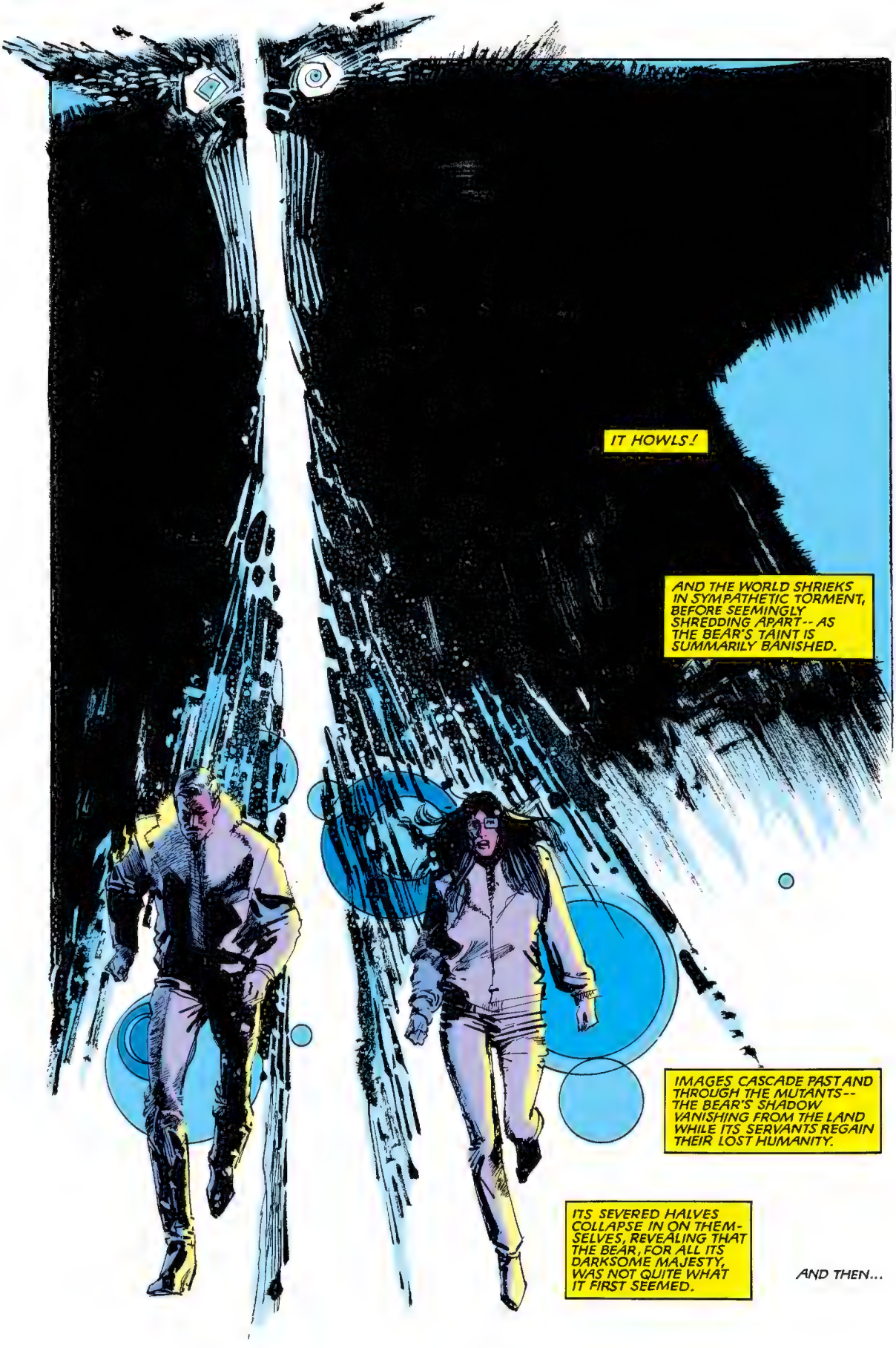
MY PLEASURE, MAGMA!
ONE DOWN, ONE TO GO!
TAKEN CARE OF, LI'L BUDDY.
WATCH YOUR BACK!
OBRIGADO, SAM-- MANY THANKS.
I HAVE IT -- THE ANSWER!
KLUDD
'BERTO! YOU DIDN'T HIT YOUR DEMON HARD ENOUGH!
YOU WANT THE SHAPE-CHANGER, MONSTER?! THEN COME FOR ME FIRST!
BUT I WARN YOU-- THE TOUCH OF MY ENCHANTED BLADE IS FATAL TO YOUR KIND...

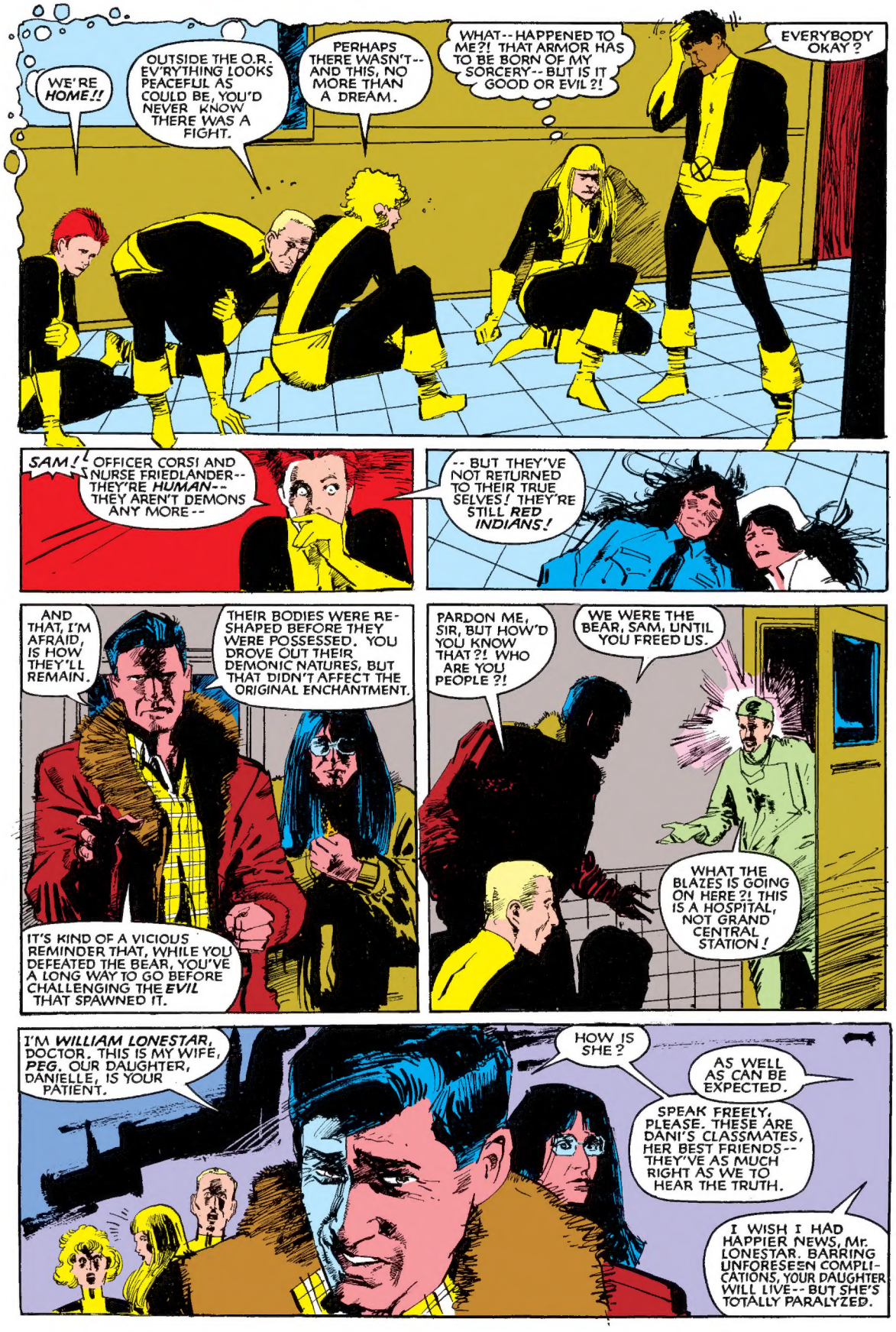

L-LOOK, ILLYANA! YOU HEALED TH' INDIAN, AS YOU DID AMARA! THA'S THE KEY! YUIR SWORD!!
DANI'S WAS THE KNOWLEDGE, OURS TH' POWER! THE MUTANTS--ACTIN' AS A TEAM! IT MUST BE CUT TO ITS HEART AND SOUL!
I THINK I UNDERSTAND. REST, KIDDO, YOUR JOB'S DONE --'BERTO, STAY BY HER!
...ESPECIALLY WHEN I THRUST...
...THROUGH THE HEART!
WE'LL NEED A DIVERSION--?!
AMARA, THE DEMONS FLINCHED FROM YOUR LAVA BLASTS-- THEY MUST BE VULNERABLE TO FIRE!
LEAVE IT TO ME, ILLYANA!
AND, AT HER COMMAND, THE GROUND BENEATH THE BEAR'S FEET BECOMES MOLTEN MAGMA.

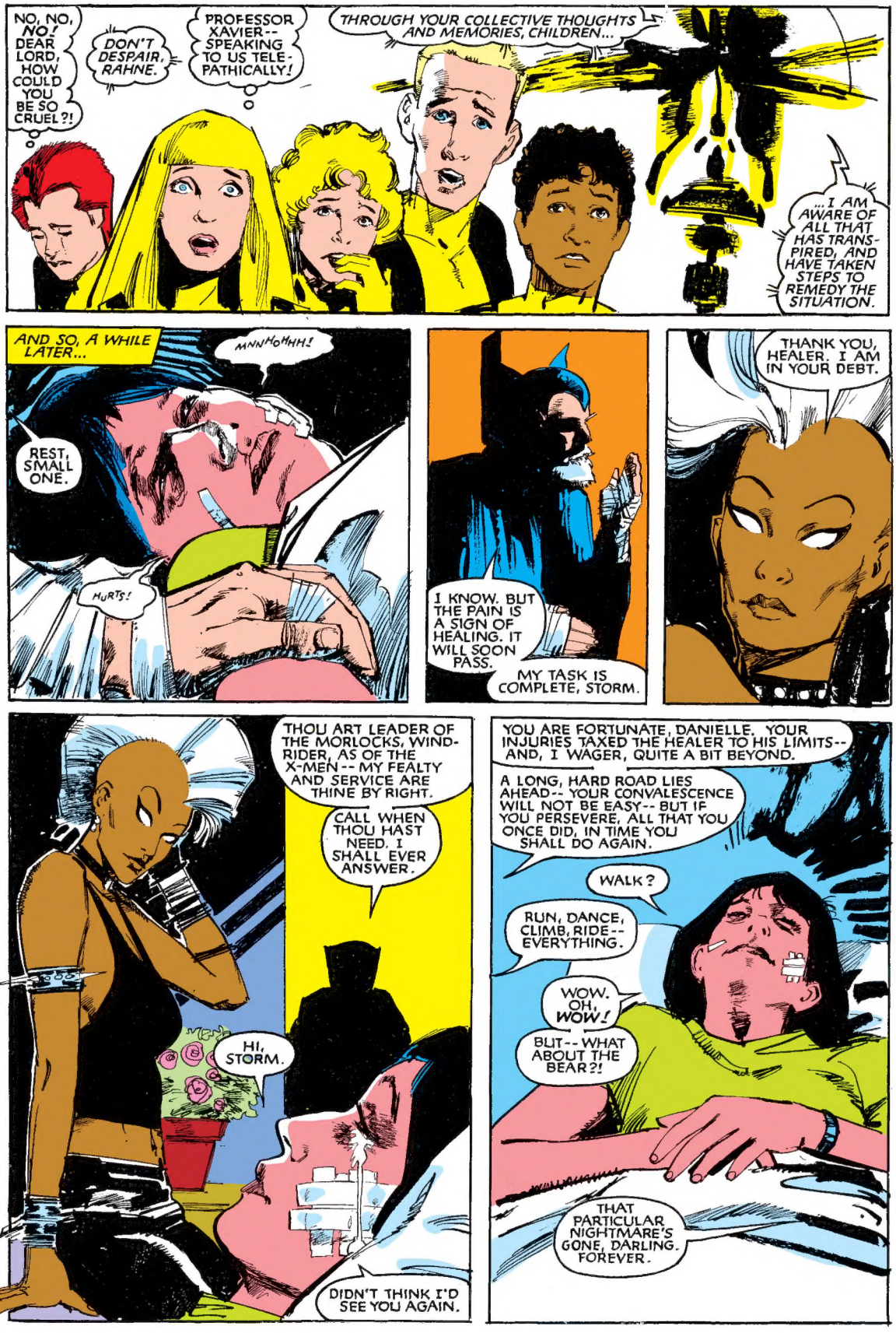


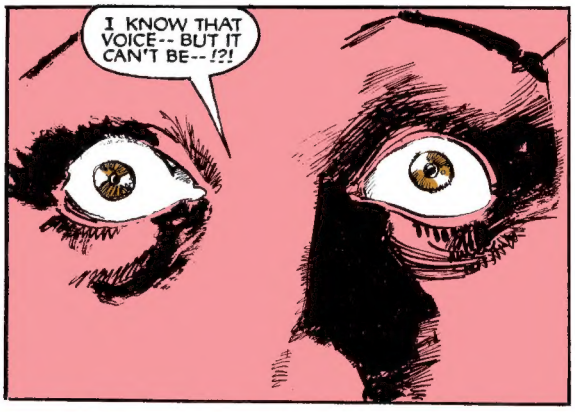

HE'S RUNNING, SAM! AFTER HIM, BEFORE HE HEALS HIMSELF!
WHADDYA HAVE IN MIND, GIRL-- HOW'RE YOU GONNA BEAT HIM?!
THE OLD FASHIONED WAY, OF COURSE.
VERY FUNNY.
HEY, PAL, IF YOU CAN'T LAUGH IN THE FACE OF DEATH, WHEN ELSE?!

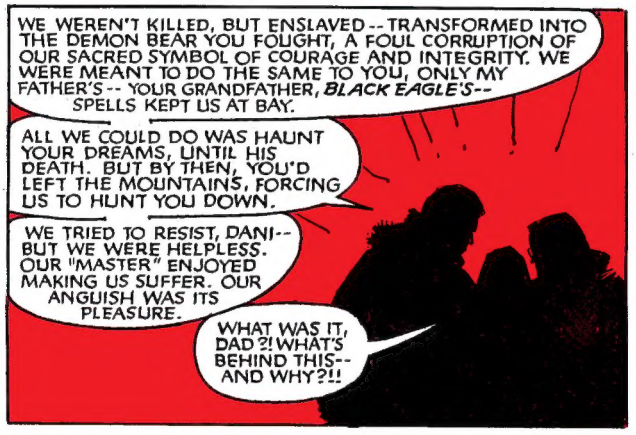

AT THE LAST, THEIR EYES MEET-- HERS AND THE BEAR'S--
--AND SHE HESITATES.
THE BEAR DWARFS HER TO THE POINT OF INSIGNIFICANCE, ITS DAEMONIC NATURE KIN TO THE EVIL WITHIN HER OWN SOUL. IT IS AS ANCIENT AS THE PLANET-- A MALEFICENCE THAT HAS EVER BEEN, SHALL EVER BE...
... WHILE ILLYANA, FOR ALL HER DREAD POWER, IS STILL VERY MUCH A CHILD. WHAT HOPE HAS SHE TO EVEN MATCH HER FOE, MUCH LESS OVERCOME IT?
THEN, WITH A CRY TORN FROM THE CORE OF HER BEING-- SOULSWORD RADIATING SO MUCH RAW ENERGY IT TURNS NIGHT TO DAY-- SHE SPLITS THE MONSTER'S SKULL!

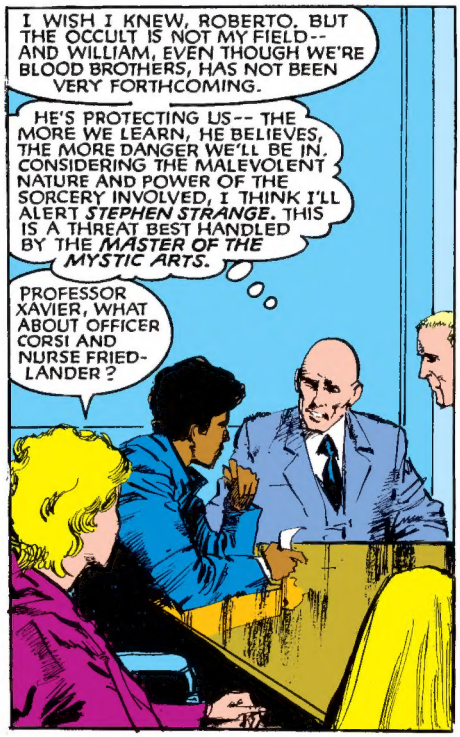

IT HOWLS!
AND THE WORLD SHRIEKS IN SYMPATHETIC TORMENT, BEFORE SEEMINGLY SHREDDING APART-- AS THE BEAR'S TAINT IS SUMMARILY BANISHED.
IMAGES CASCADE PAST AND THROUGH THE MUTANTS-- THE BEAR'S SHADOW VANISHING FROM THE LAND WHILE ITS SERVANTS REGAIN THEIR LOST HUMANITY.
ITS SEVERED HALVES COLLAPSE IN ON THEMSELVES, REVEALING THAT THE BEAR, FOR ALL ITS DARKSOME MAJESTY, WAS NOT QUITE WHAT IT FIRST SEEMED.
AND THEN...

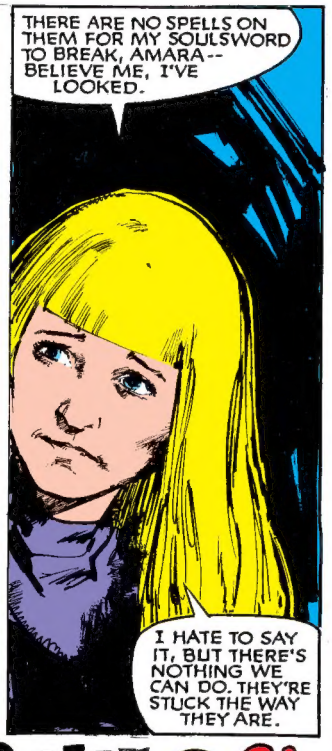

WE'RE HOME!!
OUTSIDE THE O.R. EV'RYTHING LOOKS PEACEFUL AS COULD BE, YOU'D NEVER KNOW THERE WAS A FIGHT.
PERHAPS THERE WASN'T-- AND THIS, NO MORE THAN A DREAM.
WHAT--HAPPENED TO ME?! THAT ARMOR HAS TO BE BORN OF MY SORCERY-- BUT IS IT GOOD OR EVIL?!
EVERYBODY OKAY?
SAM!
OFFICER CORSI AND NURSE FRIEDLANDER-- THEY'RE HUMAN-- THEY AREN'T DEMONS ANY MORE--
-- BUT THEY'VE NOT RETURNED TO THEIR TRUE SELVES! THEY'RE STILL RED INDIANS!
AND THAT, I'M AFRAID, IS HOW THEY'LL REMAIN.
THEIR BODIES WERE RE-SHAPED BEFORE THEY WERE POSSESSED. YOU DROVE OUT THEIR DEMONIC NATURES, BUT THAT DIDN'T AFFECT THE ORIGINAL ENCHANTMENT.
IT'S KIND OF A VICIOUS REMINDER THAT, WHILE YOU DEFEATED THE BEAR, YOU'VE A LONG WAY TO GO BEFORE CHALLENGING THE EVIL THAT SPAWNED IT.
PARDON ME, SIR, BUT HOW'D YOU KNOW THAT?! WHO ARE YOU PEOPLE?!
WE WERE THE BEAR, SAM, UNTIL YOU FREED US.
WHAT THE BLAZES IS GOING ON HERE?! THIS IS A HOSPITAL, NOT GRAND CENTRAL STATION!
I'M WILLIAM LONESTAR, DOCTOR. THIS IS MY WIFE, PEG. OUR DAUGHTER, DANIELLE, IS YOUR PATIENT.
HOW IS SHE?
AS WELL AS CAN BE EXPECTED.
SPEAK FREELY, PLEASE. THESE ARE DANI'S CLASSMATES, HER BEST FRIENDS-- THEY'VE AS MUCH RIGHT AS WE TO HEAR THE TRUTH.
I WISH I HAD HAPPIER NEWS, Mr. LONESTAR. BARRING UNFORESEEN COMPLICATIONS, YOUR DAUGHTER WILL LIVE-- BUT SHE'S TOTALLY PARALYZED.


NO, NO, NO! DEAR LORD, HOW COULD YOU BE SO CRUEL?!
DON'T DESPAIR, RAHNE.
PROFESSOR XAVIER -- SPEAKING TO US TELE-PATHICALLY!
THROUGH YOUR COLLECTIVE THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES, CHILDREN...
...I AM AWARE OF ALL THAT HAS TRANS-PIRED, AND HAVE TAKEN STEPS TO REMEDY THE SITUATION.
AND SO, A WHILE LATER...
MNNHOHHH!
REST, SMALL ONE.
HURTS!
I KNOW. BUT THE PAIN IS A SIGN OF HEALING. IT WILL SOON PASS.
MY TASK IS COMPLETE, STORM.
THANK YOU, HEALER. I AM IN YOUR DEBT.
THOU ART LEADER OF THE MORLOCKS, WIND-RIDER, AS OF THE X-MEN -- MY FEALTY AND SERVICE ARE THINE BY RIGHT.
CALL WHEN THOU HAST NEED. I SHALL EVER ANSWER.
HI, STORM.
DIDN'T THINK I'D SEE YOU AGAIN.
YOU ARE FORTUNATE, DANIELLE. YOUR INJURIES TAXED THE HEALER TO HIS LIMITS -- AND, I WAGER, QUITE A BIT BEYOND.
A LONG, HARD ROAD LIES AHEAD -- YOUR CONVALESCENCE WILL NOT BE EASY -- BUT IF YOU PERSEVERE, ALL THAT YOU ONCE DID, IN TIME YOU SHALL DO AGAIN.
WALK?
RUN, DANCE, CLIMB, RIDE -- EVERYTHING.
WOW. OH, WOW!
BUT -- WHAT ABOUT THE BEAR?!
THAT PARTICULAR NIGHTMARE'S GONE, DARLING. FOREVER.




WE WEREN'T KILLED, BUT ENSLAVED--TRANSFORMED INTO THE DEMON BEAR YOU FOUGHT, A FOUL CORRUPTION OF OUR SACRED SYMBOL OF COURAGE AND INTEGRITY. WE WERE MEANT TO DO THE SAME TO YOU, ONLY MY FATHER'S-- YOUR GRANDFATHER, BLACK EAGLE'S-- SPELLS KEPT US AT BAY.
ALL WE COULD DO WAS HAUNT YOUR DREAMS, UNTIL HIS DEATH. BUT BY THEN, YOU'D LEFT THE MOUNTAINS, FORCING US TO HUNT YOU DOWN.
WE TRIED TO RESIST, DANI-- BUT WE WERE HELPLESS. OUR "MASTER" ENJOYED MAKING US SUFFER. OUR ANGUISH WAS ITS PLEASURE.
WHAT WAS IT, DAD?! WHAT'S BEHIND THIS-- AND WHY?!!


I WISH I KNEW, ROBERTO. BUT THE OCCULT IS NOT MY FIELD-- AND WILLIAM, EVEN THOUGH WE'RE BLOOD BROTHERS, HAS NOT BEEN VERY FORTHCOMING.
HE'S PROTECTING US-- THE MORE WE LEARN, HE BELIEVES, THE MORE DANGER WE'LL BE IN. CONSIDERING THE MALEVOLENT NATURE AND POWER OF THE SORCERY INVOLVED, I THINK I'LL ALERT STEPHEN STRANGE. THIS IS A THREAT BEST HANDLED BY THE MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS.
PROFESSOR XAVIER, WHAT ABOUT OFFICER CORSI AND NURSE FRIEDLANDER?


THERE ARE NO SPELLS ON THEM FOR MY SOULSWORD TO BREAK, AMARA-- BELIEVE ME, I'VE LOOKED.
I HATE TO SAY IT, BUT THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO. THEY'RE STUCK THE WAY THEY ARE.

ANOTHER PROBLEM FOR STEPHEN. I PRAY HIS SKILLS ARE EQUAL TO THE TASK.
EVERY BATTLE--EVERY VICTORY--EXACTS A PRICE. OCCASIONALLY-- THOUGH WE WISH IT OTHERWISE-- FROM INNOCENTS.
YOU, HOWEVER, HAVE NO REASON TO BE ASHAMED. YOU SAVED LIVES AND SOULS--AND POSSIBLY, OUR ENTIRE WORLD. YOU FOUGHT WELL-- AS INDIVIDUALS AND A TEAM-- AND I, FOR ONE, AM VERY PROUD.

NEXT ISSUE ENTER **WARLOCK!** And **Slumber Party!**

MINUTEMEN
Blutman